



**S.B. 929 AN ACT EXPANDING SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE FREE SCHOOL MEALS TO ALL STUDENTS**

February 7, 2023

Senator Ceci Maher  
Representative Liz Linehan  
Members of the Committee on Children  
State Capital Building, Room 001  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Maher, Representative Linehan, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Children:

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), which represents the superintendents of Connecticut's public schools and over a hundred other executive district leaders, would like to share its comments about this bill:

**S.B. 929, "An Act Expanding School Meal Programs to Provide Free School Meals to All Students."**

CAPSS is strongly supportive of providing free school meals to every student in Connecticut. Until recently, universal free school meal programs were paid for with federal funding. Students and their families did not have to apply for the program. At the federal level, this is being phased out; students and their families in many CT communities will have to again apply and prove eligibility before students can get free or reduced price school (FRPL) meals.

Although \$30 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (2021) funding was allocated in P.A. 22-118 to help communities pay for the universal food program as long as possible in this school year, the transition back to an eligibility dependent system is going to leave many students without access to free or reduced price school food. Too many of our students rightly depend on these free meals; with grocery inflation so high, many non-FRPL eligible working families are having a difficult time paying for their children's food.

While universal and no-fee school feeding programs are needed, It is unlikely that most school districts will be in a position to finance them unless significant additional State resources are made available for this purpose. We urge our policy-makers to dedicate the State resources needed for the continuation of free and universal school meal programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Fran Rabinowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Fran" and last name "Rabinowitz" clearly legible.

Fran Rabinowitz

Executive Director

Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents